

Gus R. Douglass
Commissioner of Agriculture

The past year has been a challenging one for West Virginia's agriculture. We faced the prospect of substantial losses to the Mountain State's poultry industry, due to an Avian Influenza (AI) outbreak in neighboring Virginia.

Fortunately, thanks to the outstanding efforts of the industry, citizens of the poultry producing counties and Department of Agriculture employees, only one farm in our state was confirmed with the virus. Although 14,000 birds on that farm were depopulated, it was far fewer than the vast number that was destroyed in Virginia.

We were also very fortunate in West Virginia to have U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman visit Charleston to announce the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which will provide payments to farmers who institute conservation measures in sensitive watersheds.

Over the years, West Virginia's farmers have continued their traditions of environmental preservation, while producing the food and fiber that help feed and clothe this state, the nation and the world.

This Bulletin is a testament to the work of those farmers, as well as the work of the West Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service (WVASS), headed by State Statistician Dale R. King and Deputy State Statistician Radley Edwards.

The willingness of the WVASS staff and our state's producers to meet the challenges that face agriculture on a daily basis proves to me that, by working together, there is no obstacle we cannot overcome.

Sincerely,

Gus R. Douglass
Commissioner of Agriculture